



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 112th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 158

WASHINGTON, WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 18, 2012

No. 6

Senate

The Senate was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Friday, January 20, 2012, at 2 p.m.

House of Representatives

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 18, 2012

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. WEBSTER).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
January 18, 2012.

I hereby appoint the Honorable DANIEL WEBSTER to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

JOHN A. BOEHNER,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 17, 2012, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 1 hour and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes each, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m.

A GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY FOR A COLLECTIVE VISION IN REBUILDING AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. We begin the new year on the same sour note with which we concluded 2011—an appalling year, full of fabricated crises that didn't need to happen but which produced real-life consequences, the debt ceiling debacle being but one example. The Republican nomination of a Presidential candidate is showing the dark side of this new era of Super PACs and what happens when a party is captive to ideological extremists.

Even if you're not a Republican, it's a sad indictment. We need two constructive, effective, responsible political parties, or at least as close as we can come. It is past time to respond to things that Americans need and support.

It really doesn't need to be this hard. I would suggest that one test going forward would be dealing with issues that could be supported by both the Tea Party and the Occupy Wall Street protesters—both movements responses to a shared concern that Americans are being shortchanged, that America is on a path that is not sustainable, and of a political process that is unable to respond to their needs. Both movements are understandable and have valid concerns, that the political process is too often stacked against people trying to make changes in how we do business.

The degree of overlap between the two narratives is very encouraging, and I think it is healthy that both have found political expression. The question is the extent to which people who identify with these movements can identify with each other and with practical, achievable responses.

I think they can.

This year, I hope that both sides of the aisle here in Congress will think about what those shared objectives might be.

Agricultural reform ought to be at the very top of the list. We have a system that the right and the left can agree shortchanges most farmers and ranchers and is far too expensive. It is tilted towards large agribusiness, not to smaller operations—the quintessential family farm. We know we can do better to help more people while we save taxpayer money, improve the environment, and enhance the health of our children in dealing with school nutrition.

Another major area of agreement deals with American leadership in helping the 2 billion poor people around the world who do not have access to safe drinking water or adequate sanitation or, tragically, to both. The United States has the potential to dramatically enhance the effectiveness of the work we are already doing and the money we are already spending. I am pleased we have bipartisan legislation with my friend TED POE from Texas as the lead Republican to enhance these international water and sanitation efforts.

For years, I've been working to enhance the capacity of our health care system to help people when they are most vulnerable. This has commonly been referred to as “end of life,” but it is not just that—it is much more. It is any time people are in difficult medical conditions, when they may lose control over what happens to them. We need to

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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